

Alzheimer's Disease: Case Management

Dementia Training for Case Managers

Developing Statewide Dementia
Expertise



Developed by Oregon
Senior and Disabled Services

Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to State Program

A Program of the U.S. Administration on Aging

Case managers working with clients of the Oregon Senior and Disabled Services Division (SDSD) have a better understanding of dementia issues as a result of an eight-hour training program funded through the federal Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Program.. Case managers took part in training on dementia-related topics that included:

- *symptoms of dementia*
- *the progression of Alzheimer's disease*
- *the difference between reversible and irreversible dementias*
- *the impact of dementia on family members*
- *special caregiving skills*
- *community resources*

Why Statewide Training?

The challenge was to provide dementia support services to families throughout a state with a large rural population. SDSD, the lead agency for the Alzheimer's Demonstration project in Oregon, set out, through the existing network of aging services, to better educate staff about dementia and the needs of caregivers. The training was developed in response to perceived gaps in knowledge and a lack of recognition of dementia issues within the aging network. Case managers were targeted as the point in the field structure where a training program would be most effective, because case managers work closely with families and are in a position to use new skills with dementia clients and families.

Why Case Manager Training?

Oregon's long-term care delivery system is built on a diverse service delivery

network. The network is based on a philosophy of local control. Case managers in local communities coordinate services. Oregon's successful community-based care system prevents unnecessary institutionalization of seniors and persons with disabilities. Quality of life for Oregon's long-term care consumers depends on appropriate placements and good care plans. Through the case management system, consumers get information, assistance, assessment and planning. Case managers work with clients to ensure that the care plan matches the client's needs, values and preferences. An initial comprehensive assessment leads to a care plan that is implemented within the consumer's existing social network and uses the resources available in the community.

How the Training Project Was Developed

The Oregon Alzheimer's Demonstration project contracted with a nurse working with Legacy Health Systems to develop and implement a training module. The nurse had been involved with previous training efforts for SDSD case managers and was well known and respected. Legacy Health Systems was also a visible and respected partner at the state level. By partnering with a known and respected organization and an experienced nurse, the training program was well affiliated and had credibility from the beginning. Additionally, by partnering with a known and respected individual and agency, SDSD further strengthened existing relationships through the Alzheimer's Demonstration grant.

To promote wide attendance, training sessions were scheduled at various times and in various locations throughout the year. SDSO used an existing communication structure of newsletters, memoranda, and training calendars to notify field staff of the training sessions. Central office staff followed up the written communications with telephone calls to district managers in rural areas and talked with executive management staff in the central state office. News of the dementia training and its quality spread most effectively by "word of mouth." Case managers recommended the training to their peers and supervisors. They especially appreciated the presenter's training style and issue-focused format.

By the third year of the grant, demand for the training sessions had increased. At this time, additional sessions were offered and dementia training was then made available to case managers in the mental health network as well. By the fifth year of the grant, most case managers in the aging network had participated in the training.

Barriers and Obstacles

There were some initial barriers to attendance. Some managers were hesitant to let staff spend time in training sessions. Many rural offices have few staff. It is difficult to provide service without a full team. In response to this concern, dementia training sessions were carefully scheduled separately from other larger, multiple-day, general case manager training sessions. Training sessions were scheduled to minimize competing or conflicting with other professional meetings or conferences. Also, sessions were offered at no cost and

held in convenient locations, close to local field offices.

Benefits to Families and Oregon's Aging Network

As a direct result of the dementia training, more than 500 case managers are aware of dementia issues and resources. They are more knowledgeable about appropriate services for clients with dementia and the best ways to support families and caregivers. They can incorporate the knowledge gained into their everyday work. The needs of clients affected by dementia are now addressed as part of routine case management practices. Often case managers also serve as local dementia resources for their offices and local service populations.

In collaboration with the dementia training, additional educational products have been developed.

- A ninety-minute video that condenses the eight-hour dementia training for case managers
- A video guide, *Alzheimer's Disease: Tips for Case Managers*
- oA brochure for caregivers, *Answers and Insights*, also came from this project
- A training replication guide will soon be available

At the state level, respite issues became a higher priority, due in part to increased dementia awareness. This resulted in a lifespan respite bill passed by the legislature in 1997. Additionally, April 24 has been declared "Respite Day" by Proclamation of the Governor. Adult day care has been added to the state waiver program. Several "Faith in Action" respite programs have been funded

through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

What Does it Cost?

The actual outlay of funding for this program was minimal. Contracts to develop and conduct the training averaged around \$5,000 to \$6,000. This included the trainer's time, travel, materials and handouts. (The Oregon Alzheimer's Demonstration project also funded the video, video guide, a replication training guide and a brochure, but the costs for those items are not included in the \$5,000 to \$6,000 average above.) Additional expenses included rent for meeting space and lunches for the trainees. Other costs included the SDS staff time for participation in the development of the training module, preparation of announcements and memoranda, scheduling and arranging for training sessions, follow-up phone calls to field supervisors, analysis of training evaluations, and general oversight of the project.

Keys to Success

1. Oregon found credible partners. The nurse was affiliated with Legacy Health System. Both the nurse and Legacy are well respected throughout Oregon's aging network.
2. The training format was accessible. Training sessions were held in a variety of locations across the state and on carefully selected dates.
3. The marketing was effective. The training sessions were widely marketed throughout the state aging network and participants encouraged other case managers to attend.
4. The trainer was extremely effective and used an issue-focused format.

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The Administration on Aging is the official Federal agency dedicated to policy development, planning and the delivery of supportive home and community-based services to older persons and their caregivers through the national aging network of state and local agencies on aging, tribal organizations, service providers and volunteers.